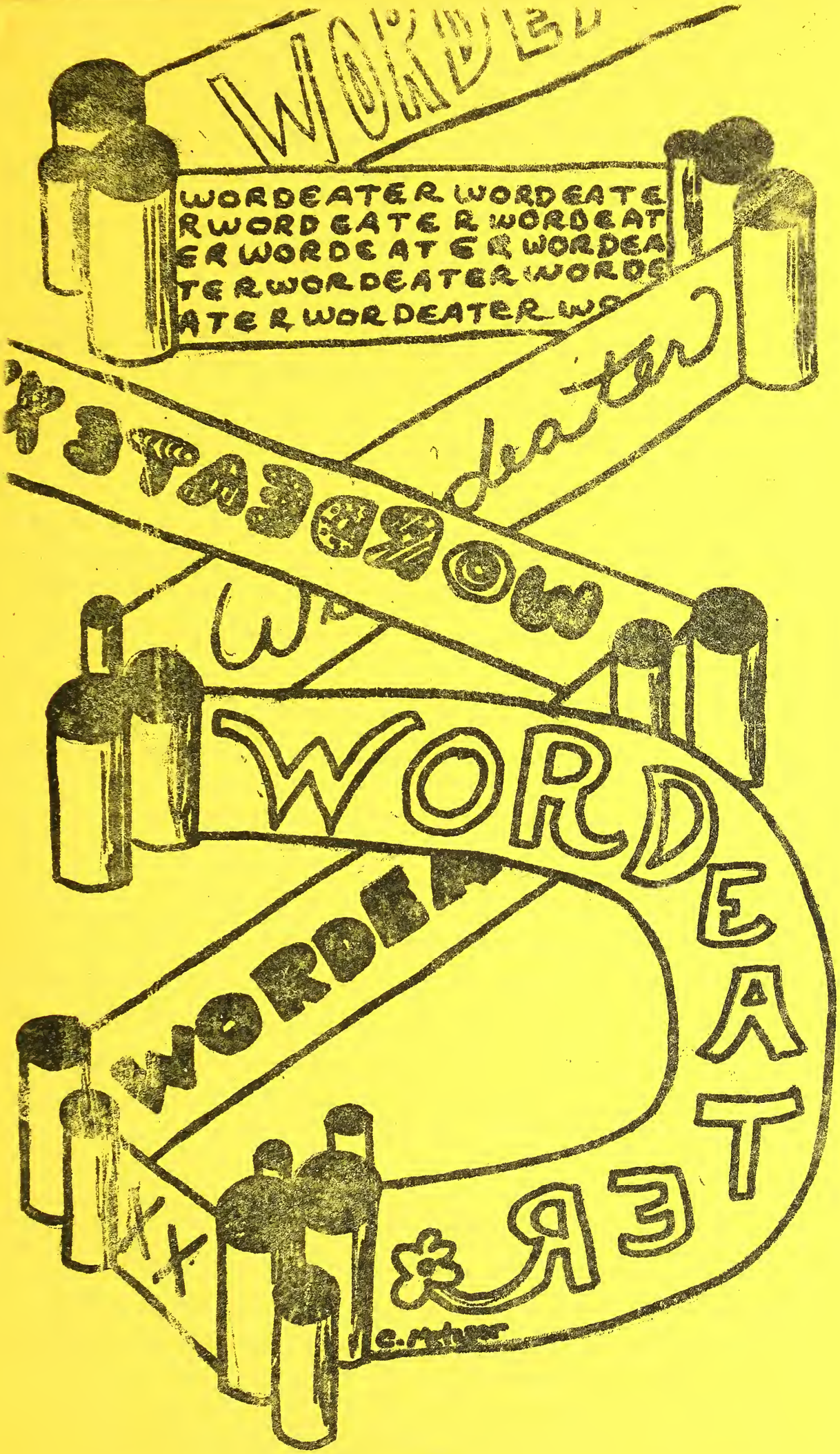


Cheryl Metzger

Richard Merrill

A NIGHT OUT WITH THE BOYS
(Screenplay)

Characters:

BERT	RONNIE
RALPHIE	PEGGY DALTON
AL	MR. DALTON

(Medium shot of front of suburban apartment house/green, '52 Buick with AL and RONNIE in back seat and BERT driving/BERT has window down and arm hanging out/AL is rolling joints in back seat/BERT honks horn)

BERT: C'mon Ralphie!

(Window on third floor opens and RALPHIE'S face appears)

RALPHIE: Be right down!

(Zoom shot on window as RALPHIE disappears/close-up shot of BERT/close-up shot of AL, still rolling joints/zoom in on bag of grass between AL'S legs and pack of rolling papers on his thigh/close-up of RONNIE/close-up of RALPHIE as he exits apartment house door and heads down sidewalk toward car)

BERT: What took you so long, Ralphie? You almost missed out on some dynamite shit!

RALPHIE: (Camera still on him; surprised expression) Shhh! My ol' lady's up there! (Points at open, third floor window)

BERT: (Close-up) So what? (Looks up at window) Hey, ol' lady! Wanna come out an' get high with us? (Laughs)

(Medium shot of AL and RONNIE as they join BERT in laughter)

RALPHIE: Bert!

BERT: (Far shot of car) I hear yer puttin' out tonight!

(More laughter as camera reappears on RALPHIE)

RALPHIE: (Close-up) Goddamn it, Bert! C'mon, man! Don't get me in trouble!

(Far shot of RALPHIE getting in car next to BERT/car takes off/fade-out)

(Fade in on car as it loudly rolls down the main street in a small town)

BERT: (Close-up while taking hit off of joint) Oh no. (Glances at rear-view mirror and puts joint down quickly) Cops!

RALPHIE: Uh, oh.

(Close-up of BERT'S foot as it eases off gas pedal/far shot of car being followed by patrol car/medium shot of BERT, AL, RALPHIE and RONNIE sitting nervously erect/far shot of patrol car turning off down side street/ medium shot of all four boys, sighing in unison/close-up of RONNIE)

RONNIE: Almost dark. Cops all over soon. Better make ourselves scarce.

BERT: (Close-up for rest of dialogue) Hey, Al. (Glances in rear-view mirror) How much stuff we got left?

AL: 'Bout half a lid.

BERT: Good! I know this place we can go to! No one'll find us!

AL: Where?

BERT: You'll see!

(Far shot of car as it turns around in nearby parking lot/fade out)

(Fade in/far shot of Buick pulling over to side of gravel road and parking/ it is dark/lit joints are all that can be seen/a low mumble of conversation is all that can be heard/camera blurs and refocuses, indicating a long period of time has elapsed/camera zooms to medium shot/all is silent except chirping of crickets/camera remains at medium shot of car during dialogue)

RALPHIE: Christ! Am I lit up!

BERT: I'm horny.

RALPHIE: Yer always horny.

BERT: I know. Hey Ronnie, what time is it?

RONNIE: 11:15.

BERT: Is that all?

RONNIE: What do ya mean 'is that all'? We been here for 2½ hours!

(RALPHIE starts laughing)

AL: I got the munchies. Let's say we go somewhere an' get some chips or something.

RONNIE: Good idea!

AL: After that, we can go get a chick for Bert!

(RALPHIE starts laughing again)

BERT: (Close up) Sonovabitch!!!

RALPHIE: (Close up) What's wrong?

BERT: (Close up/excitedly) I left the key on. The power's been on all this time. The battery has been draining for 2½ hours. (Puts hand on key to try ignition) Cross yer fingers.

(Medium shot of car as BERT tries to start it/there is a low, descending moan/ BERT tries it again/nothing/medium shot of car through dialogue)

AL: Oh, no!

RALPHIE: What'll we do?

RONNIE: Should we wait? Maybe it'll recharge.

AL: Better get to a phone!

BERT: Shut up!!! (Close up of BERT) I'm trying to think! I dunno! Just shut up an' hang loose a minute!

(Medium shot of car)

(BERT tries key again/nothing)

BERT: (Close up) I think there's a farmhouse about half a mile down.

RALPHIE: (Close up) Think they got a phone?

BERT: (Close up) I dunno if anyone even lives there or not.

RALPHIE: (Close up) Worth a try, ain't it?

(Medium shot of BERT by car/BERT walks out of picture/far shot of BERT, back to camera, walking down road/fade out)

(Fade in/PEGGY DALTON is lying on sofa with upper torso concealed by newspaper she is reading/wearing a flannel shirt and cut-off shorts, she has one bare leg draped over back of couch/a portable, black and white TV and a small reading lamp above her are on/still holding medium shot, camera circles her until her back is to it/zooms in on BERT watching her through window clear across living room/fade out)

(Fade in/far shot of lighted window in the darkness/sound of one walking on gravel/BERT moves into scene, close to camera/he stares at lighted window for a while then starts stumbling toward it/fade out)

(Fade in/BERT is in front of window now with the camera at a close shot behind him, revealing PEGGY inside, still reading, oblivious to BERT's presence/ BERT is swaying back and forth showing that he is undeniably stoned/he hesitates before turning around, looking past camera/he looks deep in thought/he turns back to window/he hesitates some more before pulling out his pocket knife and starts cutting on screen/medium side shot of BERT crawling through window/ all is silent/switch to far shot of farmhouse/loud, female scream is heard)

(Switch immediately to close up al AL in car)

AL: Holy Jesus! What was <u>that</u>?

RALPHIE: (Close up) Sounded like some dippy broad screamin!

RONNIE: (Close up) Maybe we oughtta go check it out.

AL: (Close up as he points ahead) Wait!

(Far shot of headlights of vehicle, piercing through darkness, as it turns into driveway of farmhouse)

(Switch immediately to medium shot of BERT and PEGGY/PEGGY is lying, nude and unconscious, on floor/BERT, closest to camera with back to it, is zipping up his pants/distinct sound of old pick-up truck pulling up outside catches BERT's attention/he darts out of camera's eye/switch to far shot of outside of open window as BERT dives through it, lands on stomach, gets up and starts running)

(Switch immediately to close up of RALPHIE in car)

RALPHIE: Know what <u>I</u> think

AL: (Close up) No, Ralphie, what do ya think.

RALPHIE: (Close up) Bert went to the door. Some broad was there. Let's face it. It's midnight. She got a little dippy before Bert had a chance to explain himself.

AL: (Close up) Could be. The ol' man's there and it <u>is</u> pretty quiet now.

RALPHIE: (Close up) Of course, I'm right! I mean, Bert's a <u>hairy</u> dude! He'd scare <u>anybody</u>

(Switch immediately to MR. DALTON carrying daughter PEGGY upstairs, walking away from camera)

(Switch immediately to far shot of BERT running through tall grass)

(Switch again to MR. DALTON running down the stairs, toward camera)

(Switch again to far shot of BERT still running)

(Fast switch to medium shot of MR. DALTON pulling shotgun out of bed of pick-up truck, getting into cab and taking off)

(Switch to close shot of car as the boys bounce up and down with excitment/ far shot, through car's windshield, of headlights heading toward camera/ close up of RALPHIE)

RALPHIE: Hey, hey! We're saved!

(Switch to windshield shot of headlights getting closer/close up of AL)

AL: Hey, Ralphie. Flick the headlights a couple of times so they can see us.

(Back, medium shot of RALPHIE as he does so/windshield shot of headlights getting closer/close up of RONNIE)

RONNIE: He's <u>gotta</u> have jumper cables.

(Windshield shot of headlights, getting closer/close up of AL)

AL: That's OK. Bert's got some in the trunk.

Windshield shot of headlights getting closer/close up of RALPHIE)

RALPHIE: Want me to hit the horn?

(Windshield shot of headlights getting closer/close up of AL)

AL: No. He'll find us.

(Windshield shot of headlights stopping and flicking out/darkness during next dialogue)

RONNIE: Is Bert with 'em?

RALPHIE: I dunno. I can't see a thing.

(Sound of truck door slamming)

(Close up of feet, wearing work shoes, crunching slowly across gravel)

(Switch immediately to BERT jogging/three shotgun blasts are heard in the distance/he quickens his pace/blur camera and refocus it on medium shot of MR. DALTON to indicate time lapse/he is standing in PEGGY's bedroom, who is lying in bed, still unconscious but covered up/he is standing over her, staring at her/he is crying/his head cocks toward window as a series of blood-curdling screams are heard in distance)

MR. DALTON: (Echoed voice-over, indicating that he is saying this mentally, not verbally) Probably one of those bastards in that car. No difference. He'll die soon, anyway.

(He refocuses his attention back on his daughter/he starts to cry again/ fade out)

(Fade in/medium shot of BERT running from shot-up car, screaming/he runs past camera/zoom in on bloody, fragmented arm hanging out of front, passenger window/BERT is still heard screaming/blur camera/BERT screams again/ fade out/darkness/BERT's last scream is heard echoing out)

UNKNOWN VOICE-OVER: A mass funeral was held for Ralphie (close up of RALPHIE), Al (close up of AL), and Ronnie (close up of RONNIE).

(Darkness)

UNKNOWN VOICE-OVER: Mr. Dalton (close up of MR. DALTON) sits in death row of Stateville Correctional Center with no end in sight.

(Darkness)

UNKNOWN VOICE-OVER: Peggy Dalton (close up of PEGGY) remains in a catatonic state in Manteno State Hospital. The chances of her ever being released are nil.

(Darkness)

UNKNOWN VOICE-OVER: A widespread search turned up nothing of Bert (close up of BERT). He has not been found to this day.

(Darkness)

(Fade in/close up of the bloody arm hanging out of car window/fade out)

Renee Rovenhagen

LILY WHITE DOVE

i feel a hollowness again inside me--
a pain i thought i'd left behind.
i revisited a place where i lost someone special
and now he again is on my mind.

i remember the turnoff on the interstate.
i remember the "MagiKist" sign.
i remember the soot-covered street lights.
strangely, everything appears grimier this time.

i didn't feel any physical pain.
it's the pain in my heart that will always remain.
this experience -- i didn't want you to share,
but now that you have, realize i care.

the parking lot was frozen
and it was hard to find a space.
when i would finally leave the building,
i would feel the experience a waste.

as my eyes adjusted to the bright lights,
i saw girls all waiting in chairs.
i made my way to the registration desk
and felt many an eye stare.

i didn't feel any physical pain.
it's the pain in my heart that will always remain.
this experience -- i didn't want you to share,
but now that you have, realize i care.

the rest of the visit consisted of rooms:
rooms of talk and rooms of doom.
they were glaring at me with open doors.
i wanted to turn around and see them no more.

blood, syringes, a nurse's hand -
gretting my teeth and taking all i can.
white on white, green on green -
my eyes wanted to close on everything i'd seen.

i didn't feel any physical pain.
it's the pain in my heart that will always remain.
this experience -- i didn't want you to share,
but now that you have, realize i care.

i finally walked out of the corridor of rooms.
i knew i'd left something behind.
i wanted to scream and dream free again.
i longed for someone to help me unwind.

i drove away from that building of death,
past the liquor store and five and dime.
it seemed a normal August day,
but this one wouldn't erase with time.

i didn't feel any physical pain.
it's the pain in my heart that will always remain.
this experience -- i didn't want you to share,
but now that you have, realize i care.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

YESTERDAY

it's yesterday that bothers me and the
day before it. all the love i feel seeps
into and around today only because
he was always there. my last
words to him will be "i love you."
my hand will press against the window,
alone; his will drop to his side, last. i hurt
now because i know the pain of love.

Ken Radke

A LESSON IN LIFE

Many people wonder how wars are started. It is easy to see how, if one looks into a child's life. War is inborn, and I, like most everyone, had war-like conflicts in part of my childhood. I had an army that consisted of myself and my parents, although they thought it better not to get involved directly in childrens' affairs. My opposition, Sammy, had an army that consisted of the exact number and rank of troops as I did, although his parents believed just the opposite of mine. In their eyes I was the cause of all the problems Sammy and I had. I was mostly a happy child, friendly toward most everyone, always anxious to make new friends. Sammy, on the other hand, was possessive, wildly wreckless, and quite a bit huskier than I. It was because of his superior build that he always got the best of me in the many fights we had.

We were both about six years old and fought about most everything. Thinking back, I cannot remember half the things we fought about. Many shirts were ripped and many pairs of pants were stained, and most of them mine. Eventually, I gave up the thought of ever beating him in a fight. I was content on just being able to defend myself. My father, who had seen what was going on, felt that it was part of growing up. Although he felt this way, he did not want to see his only son turn into a mass of black and blue flesh, so he would give me pointers like, "Don't smile when you're fighting" or "If you know that you're going to end up in a fight no matter what you do, hit him first". These peptalks gave me a new outlook of life on the battlefield. I felt confidence throughout me more now than ever before. My dad was on my side. It turned out that all went well for me in the next fight. That had been the first time that I heard Sammy yell for help. It felt great to be on top of him instead of him on top of me, and I sat on top of him rubbing his face in the grass until I felt he had learned not to mess with me. Of course, my parents received a call later that day, but it never amounted to anything.

That battle marked a change from fists to dirtballs. There was one particular battle when the dreaded dirtballs were first used. Sammy was happily throwing dirtballs at my house, and after repeated warnings, did nothing to cease the bombing of my home. I took it upon myself to defend it. I proceeded to bomb Sammy with dirtballs which forced him to take cover in his garage. As if shell shock had overcome me, I continued to lob dirtball after dirtball into the garage. They exploded into many pieces as they hit the cement floor and this added to the effect, which in turn prompted me to throw more. Right in the peak of my bombing, Sammy's mother walked out of the house and right into the middle of the hail of dirtballs. She was a heavy set woman and she turned so red and gave me such a stare that I could not move an inch from where I stood. My stomach had just run off to find cover from Sammy's most powerful weapon, leaving my body standing there hypnotized. After she had turned back to her normal pinkish-purple self, she handed me a broom and gave me a real scare with a belt she was waving around. I knew for a fact that she would use it, for I had seen Sammy receive that length of leather many times before. I really could not believe that someone would actually whip a child with a belt. My mother always used her thong on our bottoms in the summer, and my dad's hand in the winter. (His hand was the biggest and hurt the most.) I did my best sweeping job in case she might have the idea to take that belt to me.

That incident made me more alert for Sammy's parents when we were fighting so that I might have a chance to get away the next time. I then graduated from dirtballs to guerrilla warfare. After Sammy and his family left on vacation, and I was sure all was safe, I removed all the water faucet handles from the outside of their house with a screwdriver. Then with my screwdriver and a pair of wire cutters, I removed the doorbells, front and back.

Upon their arrival home, they noticed the change, and reported it to my father. How they knew it was me always baffled me, so not being very good under pressure, I confessed the whole thing. My father replaced the things I took, making me watch him reinstall the doorbells while he lectured me on the dangers of electricity. That was one of the times my bottom met his hand.

Of all the battles to be remembered, this one was tops. We had been arguing as usual and I was getting the better of him. He disappeared into the garage for a moment and came charging out holding a stick which he hurled like a spear. Not realizing what he had done, I stood there and received the stick a half an inch above the left eye. Everything went black in my left eye due to the blood pouring down my face. I went to the hospital and received two stiches and a rainbow lollipop. From that day on, we never fought again, perhaps because we realized that someone can get seriously hurt over a stupid disagreement.

But of course there are people who do not go through this stage in life until they are older and perhaps in government positions. In this case, they do not learn the lesson they should. Other people go through their misfortune.

Molly D.

A feeling I once had, occured to me
As something that should not had ought to be
I sat and thought about it for awhile
With no sane reason left for me to smile

It seemed that all I had, had gone against me
My life had come to some finality
The things that I was once able to feel
Were now to me, no longer, something real

The thought of it could almost make one cry
I tried but I could not figure out why
So much had changed with me throughout the years
It's sad to think it has to end in tears

Lonely solitude - what a bitter end
It seems sometimes, it's better to pretend.

Continually
pressure closing in -
shell like
trapping me inside.

Crystalline tear drops
Releasing inner tensions
Relieving pressure.

I was late before the noon
The sun came up before the moon
I saw the stars before the night
And now I'm wondering if I'm all right.

Tomorrow is too late
today is too soon.
The sun's gone down -
so don't wait for the moon.
How well do you really know yourself?
Can you say what's on your mind?
Can you climb inside your head?
What then do you expect to find?
Before the beginning
and after the end,
will you speak the truth
and not pretend?
Before you wait,
before you dream,
all that you are,
all that you seem,
do you stop to think?
Do you wonder why?
That you must live
before you die!

Too bad
that you couldn't have cared enough.
You were my chance
for refuge.
I had my last trusts
in you.
But you disregarded them.
Discarded them.
I still hope for you.
Thinking foolishly -
that anyone is good.

Reality
is the awakening of the mind.

Love
is yet to be defined.

Truth
is a rationalized lie.

Life
is a trip within a trip.

Days drift into night
as shadows into dawn
Memories forgotten
for we are far apart
As far in space
as in time.
Where are you?

Eyes that dreamed
it always seemed
were off someplace
Lies were told
but none grew old
'wrinkled face'
from worry and doubt
we figured you out
to be one you were not
love was found
on cold damp ground
we fought alot!

BROKEN

Be on your way,
nothing remains
of what we once knew
to be ours.
Leave peacefully
so as not to stir up
buried memories
forgotten in time.
You can't carry with you
segments of time
or virtually uncover
the little that remains.
It is delicate as a cambric
to save.
We were young
untouched and unafraid.
To love heedlessly
would be but a finale,
an ultimate end
to all we've been taught
to think...

OBSERVATIONS ON THE BRIDGE

I sat in a green chair,
smoking a cigarette.
A woman came
to empty my ashtray
and talk of days
of retirement and travel.
She's anxious you know
she's been alone
so long
And her "lady-friends"
so specifically quoted
share her common being.
A young man arrived
he sat in a green chair,
and smoked a cigarette.
She didn't empty his ashtray.
An excuse to discuss
her happiness
I felt she needed
to be reassured of happiness.
I said it was nice,
I really think it is.
They are both gone now.
She - back to her duties
And he?
Another is here now
in his chair.
A woman.
She reads,
and smokes a cigarette.
Two are talking
hidden in a corner,
In green chairs.
They aren' smoking.
Rather trying to void
my glances.
Their words fall
unknowingly
to my ears.
Quieting their voice
for a moment.
Then forgetting.
Others walk by
oblivious
to my writing.
I feel they are impotant
enough
to include.

John Puddicombe

BUDWEISER BUST

"Are you sure this'll work?"

"Yeah."

"We'd be in a lot of trouble if we get caught."

"We won't get caught. Not unless you screw up."

"I won't screw up, but man, this is scary."

"Just think about the money. Now go on."

"Keep your eyes open."

"I will, dammit! Go on!"

Alan stepped out of the warehouse doorway and walked across the street. He wondered how he had ever let Chuck talk him into this. Before him was a building with an ancient Budweiser advertisement painted on its side. He stopped, leaned against the sign, and lit a cigarette. The first part of the plan, as Chuck had explained it to him, was simple. Walnut Street was a short chunk of pavement with busy streets at either end. In better days it had been busy with trucks loading and unloading at the docks that stood recessed against the buildings. Now it was quiet. The downtown area had gone downhill and the business had gone elsewhere. At one end of the street was Jackson High School; at the other end was a bar and grill with a pool hall upstairs.

"O.K. listen," Chuck had stated. "Grass is in short supply, right?" That had been an understatement. There had been some big busts further south. Northern Illinois was dry.

"All those rich boys from across the river that got zoned into Jackson score their dope around here, right?" That was true too, when there was any dope to score. "So they've always got lots a bucks on 'em, right? And they always ditch classes to go to the pool hall, right?"

Alan had gotten impatient. "Right, just like we used to do, so what?"

"So you hang around near the alley, and when somebody goes by, take him in and sell him the dope."

Alan had shaken his head in disbelief. They had two ounces of Columbien. He could sell it in a minute. Why should they go to all that trouble?

Chuck had smiled, brilliantly evil. "That's where part two of the plan comes in."

Alan's mind came back to the present. His first mark was coming up the street, a pimple-faced kid of about seventeen wearing a jeans jacket and trying to look bad. He wasn't doint too good a job of it. Alan got into the character of the nervous pusher. He threw his cigarette down in the gutter, stuck his hands in his pockets, and threw quick, furtive glances up and down the street. "Score a bag?" he asked as the mark drew closer. The kid stopped to look him over. Alan stood about 5'4" and had a trustworthy face; besides that, his nervous act was deserving of an Oscar. He seemed cool.

"Whatcha got?" the kid asked.

"Columbo, fine Columbo. Almost gold."

"Let's see it," said the kid, barely able to conceal his excitement.

"Not out here, man. Let's duck into the alley."

Across the street Chuck was smiling behind his Bausch and Lomb spyglass. Alan had hooked him.

"Smell this," Alan said, gesturing with a bag he produced once they were off the street. The kid stuck his nose in the bag and inhaled deeply. He closed his eyes in quiet ecstasy for a moment, then suddenly came to life.

"Wow! Man, there hasn't been shit like this around for weeks. Where'd you get it?" In his excitement the kid had asked the one question you never ask.

Alan reacted properly; his eyes jerked open as wide as they could go and he seemed to become even more nervous. "Never mind where I got it. Do you want it or not?"

"Yeah, how much?"

"Forty."

The kid's face broke into a wide smile. "Deal!" he said, his head filling up with ideas. He was getting an ounce of Columbo for forty! He could sell half of it for that much, maybe more. Right now all that was going around was some shitty Mexican weed, and that was over priced. So he'd get his money back and have half an ounce for free! The pusher was looking anxious, so he reached inside his jacket to the secret pocket where he stashed his money. Pulling out two twenties and handing them to the other, Alan in turn relinquished the plastic bag of pale weed.

Alan smiled as the kid stashed the bag in his sock. He opened his coat wide, waving it to signal Chuck, and stuck the money in his shirt. Chuck had seen the signal and was already crossing the street "Shit! A pig!" Alan cried.

The kid looked up so fast his neck cracked. Instantly his head was empty of thoughts about profit and free dope. All he could see was himself making the call to his parents to tell them he'd been busted.

"Hide the dope!" whispered Alan, terror echoing in the alley. He lifted the lid of a garbage can; they each threw a bag inside. Alan pulled a pair of dice from his pants pocket. "We were gonna shoot craps, dig?" The kid nodded.

Chuck, dressed in an almost perfect replica of a city policeman's uniform, was entering the alley, nightstick in hand. "What's going on here?" he demanded

Alan stopped shaking the dice in his hand and turned to face him. "Oh, nothing much, officer," he said evenly. "Just a little friendly game of dice. No money or nothing."

"Just a little dice game, huh?" said Chuck, tapping his nightstick in the palm of his other hand. "You sure you

weren't selling a little dope?"

The kid looked about to faint. Alan shuffled from one foot to the other before answering. "Dope? What's dope? I'm no dope."

"Alright, smart-ass," Chuck roared, leveling his stick at Alan's head. "You just stand up against that wall and shut up. We're gonna have a look around and you better pray there's no dope."

Chuck regarded the kid as though he had been an oversight. "What's your name, boy?"

"Tom Richmond."

"How old are you?"

"Seventeen."

Chuck shook his head in a itstoobad-wehavetobustyousoyoung way. "You go to Jackson?"

"Yes sir." Tom replied, barely audible.

Chuck sighed heavily, as though making a hard decision. He looked away for a moment, then caught Tom's eyes and held them. He sighed again. "I'll tell you what, Tom," he said, "I'll give you a break this time, but if I catch you so much as cutting classes again, I'll have your butt down to the station so fast you won't know what happened, you understand?"

"Yes, sir," Tom said, his voice dripping with gratitude and relief. He walked out of the alley at a restrained pace, but once he hit the street his step quickened until he was running.

No sooner was he out of earshot when Alan and Chuck doubled up with laughter. Chuck recovered momentarily, but Alan had laughed all the air out of his lungs and leaned against the wall silently convulsed. "Man...for a minute there...I thought I was...goin' to jail," he wheezed, gasping for breath.

"Convinced ya, huh?"

"You were fantastic."

"How much did we get?"

"Forty."

"Not bad."

"You know," said Alan in a tone of admiration, "it works."

"Yeah," said Chuck, "it works."

And it did work. Over and over they played the same routine. They chose their victims well, ones too terrified at Chuck's appearance to notice that his badge did not match his hat brass or that his holster held a toy gun. Victims so happy to be let off that they ignored the fact that they were walking away a lot poorer than they had been moments before. By three o'clock they had made a decent sum of money.

"Three hundred twenty-seven dollars, a diamond ring (hot no doubt), and a Timex wristwatch - not a bad day's work."

"Let's shag one more," said Chuck. "By tomorrow the whole school will know about it. This is definitely a one-time con."

"O.K., but it had better be fast. School's out in half an hour."

"Let's do it."

"You hold the bucks, alright?"

"Sure."

Chuck leaned against the wall and raised the spyglass to his face. He would enjoy partying tonight. Just like The Sting, finish the burn and party down. He straightened his hat and made sure his shirt was properly tucked in. Two marks were approaching.

Alan made his pitch. They talked for a while, then went into the alley. Chuck waited impatiently for the signal. He was anxious to finish and get rid of these clothes. As he peered through the glass he wondered idly what the penalty was for impersonating a police officer. Alan waved his coat once or twice. Chuck moved. He had reached the center of the road when the oscillating scream of a siren froze him to the spot. A squad car was flying up the street toward him.

"Shit," he mumbled, "this is it, ten in the pen."

The squad squealed to a halt. The driver, baring a shotgun, jumped out and ran around the corner of the building bordering the alley where three terrified dopers stood watching. The other, a sargeant, was barking into the car's radio.

"Suspect has entered building in the three hundred block of Walnut Street. Request assistance." He threw the mike down without waiting for an answer. "Cover the back!" he ordered Chuck, and ran off in the same direction as his partner.

Chuck ducked back into his doorway hiding place and hurriedly began to strip off the uniform. The Sargeant had been in too much of a hurry to pay much attention to him, but as soon as he had a minute to think, he'd realize that something wasn't quite right. Chuck pulled on a t-shirt and jeans, stuffed the uniform into a grocery bag, and ran outside. Alan had the car waiting. As they burned the pavement, Chuck saw the Sargeant come back around the corner heading for the squad car. He gripped the seat and the door to keep from being thrown out. Alan was driving like a sixteen-year-old who had just seen Bullitt at the drive-in over a six-pack of PBR's.

"Is he after us?"

"I don't know, but let's ditch this shit."

They took two more fast corners, then Alan hit the brakes. The Buick slid to a stop. "There!" he shouted.

They were in front of the Salvation Army. Chuck took three steps and shoved the bag down the collection chute. He was barely back inside when the car jerked back into action. The sound of sirens was all around them.

"Cool it man, or they'll be after us for sure."

Alan nodded. They cruised nervously for a while until they were certain no one was after them. Sighs of relief fell from their mouths almost simultaneously.

Suddenly Chuck's mouth dropped open. "Oh, no," he said, burying his head in his hands. "Oh, Jesus, no."

"What's wrong?" asked his partner, glancing away from the road.

"The money, man, the money." he said miserably. "It's in the uniform."

Alan was stunned. He gripped the

steering wheel until his knuckles began to turn white. "You better be shittin' me."

"I'm not."

There was silence broken only by the hum of the Glas-paks beneath them.

"At least we still have the dope."

Alan broke into a bitter, humorless grin. "Guess again."

Chuck stared at him. "What do you mean?"

Alan turned to look him in the eye. "Man, I was selling those dudes when all of a sudden I hear sirens coming up the street and see you standing there as white as a sheet. How was I supposed to know they were after somebody else? I threw the dope down an open sewer pipe." He reached into his pocket and handed over the ring they had taken in trade. "Oh, yeah, one of those guy's old man is a jeweler. He says this is glass."

Chuck gazed at the Timex on his wrist that was all they had to show for their great con. He hoped it kept good time.

Alan shook his head and snorted. "What a waste."

"Yeah," agreed Chuck. "It wouldn't have happened to Robert Redford."

* *

John Puddicombe (con't)

Uncle Sam flexed his muscle and aimed it at the world

At 8:37 Teddy Roosevelt charged up San Juan Hill
He was never sure whether or not he shot a spic

Sometime past noon the West Point Choir sang religious hymns for the enjoyment of a foreign delegation

Audie Murphy set down his two o'clock cognac and wondered at the news that had made him obsolete

At four o'clock Jane Kennedy poured blood on files pulled from olive drab cabinets

Later in the evening Uncle Jerry spoke of first strikes and the third bomb

Time coninued to pass. The day was coming to an end.

The nightwas going to be long and not without heat.

* *

John Puddicombe (con't)

ALIVE

hello.

It's a rather nice day isn't it? That was one of the first things I noticed when I got up this morning, what a nice day it was. Too much rain lately, don't you think?

Don't you?

Another thing I noticed this morning was how old my blanket was getting. I really should throw it away but I'm rather attached to it. I've had it since I was a little boy. Then it was huge and warm and new, and now? Well, I'm hardly a child anymore. It's gotten faded and full of holes. Scarcely covers me anymore. Keeping it is just one of my little quirks, I guess.

I never could discard things just because their usefulness had ended. I guess that's why I never made it to the top; you have to learn to use anybody or anything you can to get ahead. I never really cared about being at the top, anyway. So, what does all this have to do with you? That will all come clear later. I just thought you might like to know. No, power never meant that much to me. Life did,

though. Did you ever do anything really exciting and dangerous, when at any moment you might be killed?

You should have.

It's a rush. You never appreciate life as much as when you tread at the edge of losing it. It's a feeling of, well, I guess I must say it's a feeling of power. There, we've just started to talk and I've become a hypocrite already. What I meant was, I never really wanted power over others--just control of my own destiny, my existence. That's different, don't you think?

Don't you?

Motorcycles were always fun, especially in the mountains. All those steep descents and blind curves. Adrenalin gives one the ultimate high, I should think. All the other drugs dull your senses; adrenalin makes them so much sharper. One should make love with a lot of adrenalin in the system. It's an entirely different experience.

Hang-gliding was great, too, though the feeling of constant danger wasn't there as much. When you're up in the clouds, it's an entirely different world. I saw a man break both his arms on landing once. Or upon crashing, I should say. It didn't scare me or give me any ideas about giving up flying; that man was simply careless. I am never careless; oh, almost never. There, I've lied again. I am simply too egotistical. I made a very great error just this morning, and both of us will have to pay for it. I'm sorry it had to be you, but I haven't much time and you were the first compatible mind I could latch onto and it's much too late to go searching for another. Besides, I like you, and the more I learn about you the more I like you. Although we shall have to change a few things.

Did you ever wonder what intense pain is like? I've never been in real true pain; never even broken a bone. Until this morning, of course. But I scarcely felt that. It was all so quick.

Do I talk too much? I am sorry, but I am rather shaken up still and talking helps ease the transition. Can you feel the transition yet? A weird, disembodied feeling, I'd say, and I have felt it longer than you. Do you ever wonder about reincarnation? I never did, but today I formulated a theory of sorts; you see, I believe there are two definite possibilities. One of them is that when a person dies, his soul, his id, his whatever, goes into a sort of comatose state, and if it regains enough strength it will come back and seize another body so that it could live again. I shouldn't say "it"; so that he or she could live again. Oh, look. Quick, see that bike? The red one, yeah. That's what I had, a Kawasaki Z-1, except that mine was turbo-charged and had four into one pipes and . . . oh, I guess you don't understand. Anyway, it was fast. Handling was good, too, although that doesn't help when you're running flat out at full lean and some stupid son of a bitch decides to say to hell with the stop sign and cruises out in front of you. All you can do is aim for the driver's door to try and even things up. What a thing to happen.

We were discussing something. Oh yes, my second theory. It goes like this: if a person dies, but has the will to live, I mean the true desire, the lust for life, then his spirit can live on, for awhile at least, until he can find a new body with a spirit weaker than his own, and he can force . . . hey, don't panic. Don't struggle, it's too late anyway, and besides, a lot of you will live on--your memories, your reflexes, your mannerisms. Look over there, through your--our eyes. That meat wagon's carrying away all that's left of me. Quite a mess, too. Maybe I could go to my funeral, although we didn't know each other when we were both alive. Can you still hear me?

So, I'm alone. Well, that's as it should be. It should be a good partnership, my mind and this body; it is young and lithe and strong. Perhaps I should take it for a run to my apartment. There are a few things I'd like to pick up before they get into next of kin and dividing up my possessions and all that.

It feels so good to be alive.

Puddicombe (con't)

THOSE WHO HAVE WISDOM

Death came quietly
On an evening still
In an alley dark
To a man unnamed
An empty bottle of basement booze gave witness
to his passing
Heard his confession and wrote; and was
His epitaph
Further down the road people laughed
Sang drunkenly and knew
That life was just a party
"Breakfast of Champions" they had said
Sometimes they found themselves very witty
And wise

Nancy Lockhart

FRUITFUL VISION

Imposing apple-green gazes
Gleaning glory-glimpses
Game ocular orgies
Of magic and mad

This stranger's chameleon ganders:
Leprechaun, liar, or loon?
Looks which scale the braile
Of my bone
Torrid tracings of a
Tender toy
Mesmer-eyes

Suppose the warm juices
Had only come
From an experience my imagination
Had invented?
Only a dream that I have rented
Of a moment
Spent in Eden's eternal orchard?

FRAGILE: HANDLE WITH CARE

I suffered silently
A vertigo love
And endured the engorgement
Of joy for a time.
Till my love-blood spilled out
Like a lactating wine,
A vintage of bitter and sweet.
Twas a good year, I thought,
And I filled to the deep
A libation...for you, my lover.

Suddenly! Paralyzed in the labyrinth
Of your laughing
Salvo, sonar -- shattering --
All that I gave spilling
Albuminously, luminously, bare.
Left to cry my Humpty-dumpty self
To sleep.

ESCAPE

I fell softly off the edge
Of living
Into the arms of a man
Who sang his songs
To me.
As his laser eyes melted
My fear,
We ran with our faces up
Drinking the rain
And tasted what it's like
To be free.

Then I awoke
To the pain and the whispers
And the face
Of the big ugly clock.

Molly B.

My brain--the drugs
dysphasia
My mind--uncreative
dysnimia
My eyes--so blurred
dysopia
My nose--a cold
dysosmia
My voice--is hoarse
dysphonia
My vocabulary--
dysphrasia
My throat--a lump
dysphaqia
My lungs--smoke-filled
dysphea
My heart--unfeeling
dyspathy
My stomach--all knots
dyspepsia
My body--the "whites"
dysphoria
And I--the rare
dysprosium.

Up all night
speed in my brain
The words I'm writing
becoming inane.
My palms are wet,
my lips are dry.
The cause, the fact,
pinpoint eye.

Use, abuse,
incivism.
Total lack
of patriotism.
Incertitude,
uncertainty
My mind
a blank obscurity.

I sit
smoking a cigarette
trying to be creative.
But you invade my mind
stripping me of my vanity.
The door is closed
and I imagine you here.
Painting the features
of your face,
outlining your body
in soft pastels.
The colors blend together
forming a kind of nothing.
And I wish you here.

Molly B. (con't)

BORN TO BE WILD

Remember me
when times are rough
and suicide seems like an answer.
When parole boards turn you down
and fights are things
so hard to stay away from.
Talk to me silently
when time leaves you alone.
When people are constantly
on your case.
Memories and promises
of love and laughter
sometimes help to remove shadows
that cast themselves upon the floor
from bars on the wall.
Unwritten poetry plays itself
upon our minds,
unspoken words
confined within our throats,
leaving lumps hard to swallow.
I've written you letters
you answer them fine
with lines of hope, despair,
and of time.
I picture you sitting there
smoking a Kool cigarette
stumbling over truths of
"Sometimes I cry."
Realizing you took a step
down the ladder that leads you to freedom.
I remember words you said
when heroin seemed to be
"your only friend."
When the needle
continuously buried itself
within your veins.
Times before that,
you needed no substance,
but beau
or cheap Mexican dope
to sweeten your life.
When Boones Farm
And Annie Green Springs
soothed your throat,
and"Born To Be Wild"
was your song.
Laughter came frequently to you then.
And that is how I love you now.
I don't want to see your worry-creased face,
tightened with hate --
cold eyes
filled with knowledge.
Go to your bike
95 m.p.h. of freedom.
Come for me and we'll run,
through wheat fields,
never stopping
til' exhaustion makes us fall.
Imagine the bars gone,
and write away
the absence of innocence.

Nadine Gonda

A BREAKFAST WITHOUT ORANGE JUICE

As I opened my eyes, the familiar aroma of hickory-smoked bacon drifted to my nostrils. What time was it anyway? Voices in the next room were muffled by the faded curtain which hung as a door to my room. There were two, no, three people sitting at the kitchen table, as far as I could tell. I glanced at the window and swere to myself. It was no later than four a.m. Damn! It was hard to relax on a vaction with this family of mine! I rolled toward the curtain, rustling the musty blankets on my bed, and stretched an arm to lift it.

"We can head out toward the dam today -- the weeds are still high, and we're bound to be the only ones there this early."

Just as I thought, Dad was outing the daily fishing expedition. Gram sat across from him rearranging butter and plates, knives and forks, to give our breakfast table its proper setting, and stetching further, I saw Grandma at the stove, lifting each rubbery piece of bacon with her fork and rearranging them in the black iron skillet.

Dropping the curtain, I pushed back the blankets and swung my feet to the icy linoleum floor. Where were those slippers? I quickly grabbed by robe to ward off the chill of the Minnesota morning, and flung the curtain to one side.

"Well, look who's finally out of bed. G'morning sleepin' beauty--the day's half over with! You're going to sleep your life away."

I never ceased to be amazed at Dad's ability to make a glorious thing like sleep seem so criminal. I smiled a "Good morning everyone" and sat at the table.

"Ready for some bacon and toast, hon? There's coffee on and I can make you a nice bowl of oatmeal--Grandpa always said there was no better breakfast before fishin'--oatmeal and toast."

I tried not to show my disgust at the thought of oatmeal.

"No thanks, Gram, the bacon and coffee are fine."

Mom headed for the stove, and I prepared myself for her usual kitchen conversation with Gram.

"Here, Ma, you sit down, I can get the rest of it. Go on, sit down and drink your coffee."

"That's all right, Bev. C'mon now, you know I'd rather cook than sit anyway---Just never mind.'

Despite both of their protests, neither would sit down I decided three cooks would be quite overdoing it, and remained seated.

"Well, are you going with us?"

Dad was recruitin fishing troops and, for a change, I elisted.

"Sure, Pop. How long 'til we leave?"

"Right after breakfast---I want to get out there as soon as we can. Won't catch any fish sittin' in here."

Just then a bowl of steaming oatmeal was set in front of me.

"What's this?"

"Oatmeal! If you're going fishin' you need a good hot breakfast. Have a little sugar on it. Grandpa always said you should eat a nice bowl of oatmeal before goin' fishin'."

I looked at Gram, beaming now, satisfied that her grandaughter was eating a healthy, hearty breakfast. How could I refuse?

I managed a "Thanks Gram, this should really hit the spot!"

The air was chilly, and I pulled the hood of my sweatshirt on, tying it under my chin. Picking up three fishing poles from the side of the babin, I started toward the dock. The rest of the resort seemed still sleeping, although the faint hickory-smoked aroma told me we were not the only insane vacationers. I could see Dad on the dock, stocking our small fishing boat with his equipment. Envisioning past Christmases of new tackle boxes, "the latest" lures, and other miscellaneous fishing gear, I wondered what new hobby of his we could begin supplying.

The lake was quiet, and as the dock creaked beneath me, water splashed softly against the boat and rocked it gently.

"All set, Pop?"

"Yeah, this just about does it. Where's your mother?"

"She was just helping Grm with the kitchen, should be out in a minute."

I stepped into the boat, holding Dad's hand for balance. It was still rocking when I sat down, and I reached for my favorite life jacket and began the task of securing it properly.

The hum of the motor made talking impossible, and the wind had doubled since we left shore. I slid down to the floor of the boat, to avoid the wind and spray, and reaching into the front pocket of my sweatshirt, found the three Hershey bars I'd remembered to bring along. I rearranged the fishing poles on the floor of the boat, and settled in for the ride. We were skimming the lake at top speed for about ten minutes or so, when Dad cut the motor and started to troll. The sudden silence was almost deafening, and it took me a minute to get used to it.

The motor was puttering quietly now, and I slid up to my seat once again. We had entered a forest of weeds, extending at least three feet out of the top of the water as far as I could see. A vision of the beach we'd left behind flashed through my mind, and I began wondering why I'd gotten involved in this whole thing at all. A faint, yet

steady rumble in the distance told me we were nearing the dam, and I reached into my sweatshirt for a Hershey bar.

"Hey Mom, how long ya think we'll be out here?"

(That sun and sandy beach were gnawing at me now.)

"Oh, let's see, it's what, five o'clock? We should head in for lunch around eleven thirty."

I hoped she was kidding, but her face showed no signs of mischief. Why did I do this?? Six and one half hours of sheer boredom! The thought was almost unbearable.

The rumble was growing louder by the minute, and as we rounded a peninsula, the din rose to non-speaking proportions. The dam was in sight now, and its three white cement pillars jutted out of the water like lighthouses. They seemed a small target in such a treacherous place. The current moved quickly, and streams of saran-like water flowed through and over the dam between the pillars, collecting in bundles of white frothy suds.

Dad had cut the motor completely and moved to the front of the boat. I'd been here with the two of them once before. Dad had let the current carry us to the pillars, and he'd tied the boat between two of them, seemingly securely, though the rear of the boat had thumped against the cement endlessly from the racing water beneath it. He was using the oar now, directing the craft steadily toward the chosen pillar. I noticed my Hershey Bar was melting, and chided myself for being nervous -- Dad had done this a thousand times before. We had almost reached the center pillar, and Dad dropped the oar back into the boat and reached for the rope. His first glance downward told me something was wrong. He turned slightly, his eyes darting around the floor of the boat. Where was that damned rope? Relief swept through me as he leaned down to his rear -- he'd found it, no, he was reaching for the oar. I looked up, and understood his attempt to stop the pillars, now racing toward us. A deeply-rooted ache devoured my stomach and I slid to the floor of the boat -- Mom followed me, and Dad was desperately flailing the oar from side to side. I yelled for him to get down but my voice was lost in the rush of the water.

We hit.

Tackle boxes lunged to the front of the boat, and above them Dad hung suspended for a moment, a look of disbelief in his eyes. He fell then, his weight carrying him through, and as he hit the side of the boat a muffled groan joined the hellish noise. His weight was too much for the side of the boat to bear, and he slid off, shoving the boat with his body. We bounced only once, and I was sucked into the water, floating now in an unknown world.

Where the hell was the sky? My chest was burning, and I opened my eyes to a bubbling grey horror. The life jacket dragged me upward, and I bobbed to the top, gasping and choking on muddy water. The current was pulling me and I grabbed frantically at the ominous weeds to stop the race downstream. A peninsula jutted out into the water up ahead, thorn bushes planted along the shore I was headed toward.

It was my only chance.

I let the current take me, swiftly, and glued my eyes on the approaching shoreline. I was ready...

NOW!!!

I reached out, stretching my body upward, groping pleadingly. My hands were on fire, stinging through the thorns. I'd gotten hold of something, I had no idea what, and I pulled myself with all the strength I had. I was tearing the hair out of the water, twisting and pulling the roots. My arms touched earth now, and I scrappled the ground to hang on. Sliding, scraping -- I pulled myself forward and out of the snarling waters.

I was gasping, begging for oxygen, and my chest was hammering uncontrollably. Jesus---I--needed--air. Slowly my lungs cooled, like a bellows squelching red embers.

Jesus!! Mom and Dad...

I shot my eyes to the pillars, smiling hideously at me now, and shuddered. Jesus, where were they? I wondered how long I'd been in the water, how long since we'd hit--my eyes darted around the water. A Hershey wrapper was propelled past me by the current. Christ! Where were they? I stared at the pillars, asking for an answer in vain. The wrapper was flying downstream, skipping across the foam and toward shore...

I saw them.

The two of them, bobbing almost as I had -- face down -- his jacket was caught on a branch that extended from the shore, and the current was rolling around him. She was wedged between her man and the earth, relaxed and bobbing rhythmatically at his side.

I was hoping they'd see me.

"Mo-o-o-m! Da-a-a-ad! Over here!"

The current picked up and their bodies began bobbing violently. I turned away quickly and vomited my morning oatmeal.

PASSAGES

A fleeting moment's passageway from life --
You slither in and pluck us from all sight.
"Destroy the vessel! Steal the breathing light!"
Your message haunts us, stabbing, in our strife.

Oh horrid, icey, wounding butcher knife!
Spare lovers one empassioned magnet night!
A moment more! Yet we have lost the fight.
Leave not a lonely, grey, pathetic wife...

And yet, the black of morning sees the day --
The endless dripping faucet of our wait
To join one love so lost and far away!
We look to you, and so, anticipate
The promise of a peaceful passageway,
To this our strange but necessary fate.

QUESTION

Remember when
Mothers were tall as the trees
And a chair was a mountain to climb?
You wondered if Bactine would sting
your scraped knees
And were proud because you could
tell time?

Remember when
Dolls were the people you knew
And the gun that you had was a toy?
And when Santa presented a puppy to you
You wondered if it was a boy?

Remember when
Broken twigs turned into swords
And the enemy always returned?
And your first day of school
When you ran home to tell
Mom and Daddy how much you had learned?

Remember when
Going to Grandma's was fun
And the turkey was always so brown?
And the toys, and the games, and the days
were so long,
And you laughed at the sight of a clown?

Imagine if life were as innocent now
And as simple to live, and as pure.

Is it life that has changed
Or the people who live it -- Remembering when.
Are you sure?

Robert Newsome

DETERIO

Subject possible theoretic deterioration of the universe due to transformation and accumulation of metaphysical energy in a seperating existance.

Characters Socrates, Einstein, Timothy Leary

Setting Einstein's dressing room just before an amateur violin concert in Haight Ashbury. Leary is very young and in research into communication with the dead via the Psylocibin Intensification Project. They have on loan a robot Socrates from Disney World and have given it nine tamma leaves, to give him life.

Einstein: "I have the robot hooked up to my temporal persona receiver and we should be able to clarify all our own conceptual opinions soon by his dialectic feedback."

Tim: "How does the temporal persona receiver work?"

THE SOCRATES ROBOT SPEAKS: "What I want to know is how feedback works."

Tim: "Am I hallucinating or don't you know what feedback is?"

Einstein: "Temporal persona receiver is Greek enough for Socrates to understand, but feedback is twentieth century jargon for a loop of amplification properties. Actually, we can understand each other adequately through the use of my translation device. Socrates is merely up to his old tricks of feigned ignorance."

Tim: "Please spare us the theatrics Socrates and help us deal with the serious problem of intellectual entropy."

Socrates: "Far from deteriorating I would say metaphysical progress has compounded itself since my time. I have been observing, you know."

Einstein: "But this dualistic snowbake is unbalancing the material nature of my universe. Must I revise my equation to include such energies?"

Socrates: "You don't understand men of the mental persuasion such as I feed upon such energies I need it like a drug."

Tim: "A man after my own faith."

Socrates: "Yes, Tim. But what is this faith of which you speak, is it faith-grounded-probability-specific-event cause and effect relationships or faith of religion."

Tim: "Blind faith the recording group is more relevant. They have removed the concept of Faith even furthur away."

Socrates: "How dryly you probe my poor regard for Art. I must admit however that a faith of blind acceptance is more Ideal based as it is upon data underived from the sense of sight. And wouldn't Deaf, Dumb, and Blind Faith be even better. Face infinite folding increment eatres."

Tim: "I don't play pinball. But I do enjoy some sensory deprivation now and then, while I'm not corrupting the youth."

Einstein: "That's enough humor Tim. Please let me engage Socrates in a dialectic argument. Plato seemed to put the opinion in your mouth that mind and body shared a dualistic relationship, which if true seems to indicate a translation of matter into Idea in the course of time through a process of evolution."

Socrates: "On the contrary these Absolute Ideas have not evolved, they have always existed. We participate in these forms and to know them is to love them. Beauty is balance."

Tim: "Maybe what we need to grok here is conversation. If we were to spend more time contemplating the existing truths of being rather than pursuing a materialistic course of culture thee balance can be maintained."

Socrates: "What we need to grope is conversation. But I quite agree with contemplation of existing truths. Thee two of you with your bombs and chemicals have contributed to materially spiritualize culture. The energies each of you employ are useful. They are but means to an end. That end is the celebration of life and death and the cycle of rebirth, and I would tell you what futures you face but that is both Top Secret and Forbidden Knowledge respectively."

As the scene ends I am standing under

Visitation of the Unforeseen

my plight in resolution
seen it clear calamity
just when things are going well
in life's prediction based on me
manic uttered deep depression
from the ripple grows the swell
talking tongues in retrogression
humored tales that I can tell
when up she walks amongst you
visitation of the unforeseen

what to say to liquid beauty
reaching tides that inner dwell
universal constant duty
to flirtate the instant spell
and immerse myself in silence
just a word might break the shell
around the barely spoken first ones
when i know i speak them well my
visitation of the unforeseen

parting bodies all surround
her and curvaciously they sway
they compare in cute crescendo
as i slowly make my way
across the ever looming distance
in between us which will stay
despite ship passing wistful greeting
all composed of what i say my
visitation of the unforeseen

because i'd like to get to know
with these senses all a screen
it is diaphonous and shapely thee
illumined face i've seen
Alive you lurk within a spark of curiosity
and these's a pain of separation
I can't stand that i have been

Turn the calculated passion
play into a chosen rhyme
Turn to laughter at the riddle
that we ponder passing time
To just unite with you a moment
like a ball of broken twine
and turn to leave you with
this tangled ending that
I mind

Richard Merrill

HINSDALE GLASS

Let's Look Through The hinsdale glass
And See How The other side Lives
Wallowing In Their paper green sea
They Receive But They Never Give

$$

Dining With finest silverware
They Stuff Thin Piggish Faces
Then With silk-monogrammed napkins
They Remove Unsightly Traces

$$

Fanning In Their vacation spots
Swimming In concrete pools
They Live In A World All Their Own
They Don't Bother With Us "fools"

$$

When Us "fools" Do Something Wrong
Our Lives Are Blasted To Rubble
The Pigs Go To Their paper green sea
To Bail Them Out Of Trouble

$$

Glad You Could Look Through The hinsdale glass
To See How "Us" and "them" Range
I Only Hope The Tables Are Turned
So This Old World Soon Can Change

$$

BIOLOGY 101

Karen unlocked the door to her small, quaint apartment. As she went in, she slammed the door and turned on the light. After throwing her purse on the sofa, she flopped down in a nearby chair. She was exhausted. Exhausted or not, she felt like she was on top of the world. It was not every night she went on a date with her biology teacher.

Dave Neely was eight years older than she. Fresh out of grad school, he started teaching at Brimsley High the year before. It was then that he started to pay attention to Karen, first, on a strictly student-teacher relationship. By the end of the year, it had gone beyond that. As soon as school let out for the summer, he started calling her on the phone every week or so, and even dropping by once in a while. Karen's folks didn't approve. That was one reason (but not the main one) that she got a part-time job, found a place and moved out of the house. Then, her and Dave's phone conversations and visits got a little more involved.

Now, here it was two-and-a-half weeks into the new school year and Dave asked her out after class broke up one day. Karen was flabbergasted. It totally blew her mind. She had to say "yes".

Of course, saying "yes" meant breaking her date with Rick Allerdeis. She had never been out with him either, but a teacher. Wow! Karen wasn't really sure whether or not to go out with Rick even after she said "yes" to him. Rick was strange. He never talked much; just kind of sauntered up and down the hall and stared at Karen. God! How she hated that! She figured that if she went out with him, he would quit staring at her. She knew he was going to ask her out. If he said "hi" to anyone, that meant he was on pretty good terms with them. He started to say "hi" to her as she went to and from class. He greeted her more often every day. Finally he asked her out --- more or less. After about five minutes of stuttering from him, Karen figured that she would either have to be late for class or say "yes". She chose the latter.

Then Dave asked her out and that did it. She went to Rick, claiming she had a funeral to go to. It was then that Rick somewhat frightened her. After staring her straight in the eyes (Goddamn that staring!) for what seemed an eternity, he merely mumbled an ominous "OK", then turned and shuffled away.

Karen reached across the coffee table into her purse which was still on the sofa. She pulled out a cigarette and lit it. It was her senior year. After getting a job and moving away from her folks, she was thinking of quitting school too, but what the hell. It was her last year. She had Dave (it still seemed odd calling him "Dave" instead of "Mr. Neely") for one class -- Biology 101. She almost slipped a couple of times and called him "Dave" in class, but no one caught on.

That made Karen's mind shift to a couple of hours ago, before Dave picked her up. What if someone from school saw them? Dave could have lost his job. No one saw them though, and Karen somehow got the feeling that Dave didn't care if someone saw them anyway. That made her feel good.

Karen's mind came back to the present. She looked at her watch. It surprised her that it was only 10:45 until she remembered that they had to break early because Dave had some work to do at the school. That was one of Dave's weird little habits. He worked late. He had a key made for the school building's west door so he could get in after the janitor left and work at night. He said his brain always functions better then. He would probably be in there grading papers until midnight.

Just then, the phone rang. Karen picked it up.

"Hello."

"Hello, Karen?"

It was Dave.

"Yeah, Dave. What is it?"

"Uh--I--got finished early and--I was wondering if we could uh--"

Something was wrong. Karen could tell.

"---go back out--over to my place, y'know?"

"Well--" Karen hesitated.

"I m-mean it's s-still early."

"Yeah, I guess so."

"Well--uh--uhh---"

"What's wrong, Dave?"

No answer.

"Dave?"

"I feel like an ass."

"What?"

"Uhhh---my car's on the blink. I need a ride and I was---uh---wondering i-if--uh---"

"Sure, Dave. I'll be right over. See you in a few minutes, OK?"

"Sure, sure."

"Bye-bye."

CLICK!!

Karen was puzzled.

Dave hung up the phone. He was in a cold sweat. He was hesitant to look up at the barrel of the revolver a few inches from his face. He buried his wet face in his trembling hands.

Karen knew something was wrong when she pulled up in front of the school.

Usually, all the lights in the biology lab were on and they shone like a neon sign for almost a block.

Tonight, it was different. Every dark corner of the universe seemed to surround the entire building.

Karen's Pinto rolled up to the west side of the school building. She parked her car, got out and walked to the door with growing apprehension. She pushed against it. Unlocked. Dave was here alright. Karen could barely make out the tail end of his Olds Cutlass protruding into the darkness from the faculty parking lot behind the building. Dave had to be there. Then, why no lights?

The darkness swallowed Karen as she walked into the high school. The purplish moonlight from a nearby hall window reflected off of the unending rows of lockers which lined the corridors. The only thing that interrupted the flowing rhythm of the graffiti-scarred lockers was the doorway to the biology room.

"Dave?"

No answer.

"Dave?" Karen's voice trembled this time.

The darkness had a sound all its own.

"It's me. Karen."

Nothing.

She slowly approached the biology door. Her hand wavered as it reached to open it. The dull, silver doorknob turned silently with ease. The hinges squeaked hideously as the massive door opened. Karen went in.

The moonlight from the window pierced through the particles of darkness, revealing a man sprawled on his back on Dave's desk. He was facing upward. Though Karen couldn't make out his face, she could vividly see the dull, crimson color on his shirt. A white shirt. Dave's shirt.

Karen could almost see the particles of darkness shoot out in all directions as she screamed.

The roar of silence was louder now.

She screamed again.

That damned silence!

She started to scream again until she heard the footsteps. They were coming up the hall toward the biology door. The open biology door.

Before Karen even knew what she was doing, she had closed the door, locked it, and hid underneath one of the lab tables.

The footsteps ceased right outside the door. The doorknob jiggled.

Karen bit into her lower lip.

The doorknob quit jiggling.

The sweat forming on Karen's palms made her hands slip-slide on the concrete floor. Only her knees were still, the flesh of them almost adhering to the cold floor.

The gunshot was followed by the shattered fragments of the doorknob and lock scattering across the floor, the creaking of the door's hinges, and then the footsteps.

Karen's heart immediately forced itself up to her throat, almost choking her. The roar of the silence actually made her ears hurt.

The footsteps kept coming.

The darkness. It was made worse by the tears forming in Karen's eyes.

The footsteps.

Karen's heart almost stopped. The footsteps, instead of coming like before, were now going. The sound of them got farther away. Karen could tell that they stopped at the doorway.

The flourescent lights overhead came on.

Karen's eyes exploded.

Rick Allerdeis stood by the door, one hand on the sight switch, the other on the revolver.

"You can hide all you want to, bitch." Rick said, almost jokingly. "I will find you."

Karen remained under the table.

"Would you like me to tell you what all you took from me?" Rick's voice was frenzied and nervous. "You took away the only chance I ever had with a girl. You took away the only date I ever had. You took away the only love I've ever known. You took away the only chance I had to make a man out of myself."

The roar of the silence filled the pause.

Karen, again, bit her lower lip.

"You took all that away from me."

Rick's hand moved from the light switch. It shifted to his crotch as he moved towards Dave's body.

"But now I'm gonna get it all back."

Karen glanced down at the floor. A dissected earthworm lay beneath her. Her eyes filled with tears again. Was this to be the last thing she would ever see? A damned dead earthworm?

Rick suddenly screamed, louder than Karen had managed to earlier. Karen started, raised up, banged her head on the bottom of the table, then rolled out of the way before getting to her feet.

Dave's hand was gripped tightly around Rick's wrist. When Rick screamed, he looked down in time to see Dave's eyes open. Rick dropped the gun.

Dave's eyes rolled up into his head, out of sight, until only the bloodshot, yellowish whites of his eyeballs showed. His head fell back, but his lifeless hand still tightly gripped Rick's quivering wrist.

Rick shook it off, stumbled back, and fell into the corner, still screaming.

Rick's maniacal screaming pounded on Karen's brain.

"STOP!!!" she shouted, her hands over her ears.

Rick didn't stop.

Rick's screaming made Karen oblivious to what she was doing as she grabbed the revolver off of the floor and fired the three remaining shots into the glassey-eyed, screaming face of Rick Allerdeis.

The screaming was reduced to a choking, sickening gurgle.

Karen dropped the gun.

The gurgling stopped.

The roar of the silence continued.

AFTER MONTHS OF LEGAL PROCEDURE, THEY RULED IT AS "JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDE". KAREN DROVE AN EXTRA TWENTY MILES INTO THE NEXT COMMUNITY EVERY MORNING TO FINISH HIGH SCHOOL.

AN AUTOPSY PERFORMED ON RICK ALLERDEIS UNCOVERED A SEVERE BRAIN TUMOR. IT IS NOT KNOWN IF THE TUMOR WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS ERRATIC BEHAVIOR OR NOT.

Colette Quoss

CHILDHOOD

Those happy times
of nursery rhymes
Of tennis shoes
the bruised-knee blues
To have them back
those days I lack
I surely would
if just I could.

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

People...
They will talk
and someday listen.
They will hear
and someday understand.
They will hate
and someday love.
They will laugh
and someday cry.
They will live
and someday die.
They will fight
and someday win.
They all will see
and always be
People that are you and me

Renee Rovenhagen

DANDELION FUZZIE

Sitting and thinking,
watching everything fold and fade
    into a kaleidescope of yesterdays, todays, and tomorrows.
Yesterdays are collaged together with tears
    and stained by melted love.
Dandelion fuzzies, real "I love you's", and faded blue jeans
    are a still life always moving --
        my today.
And tomorrow is a finger painting
    of smiles, touches, green grass, blue sky --
        you and me.

SOME DAY

some day,
i'll collage together times
we were alone for a few hours, a couple
minutes;
times we talked nonstop about this, that,
and the other.
i'll paste them in your palm,
on your mouth,
on and all across the bathroom
mirror.
you won't miss them
and neither will i.

LEAP FROG

summer seems so close,
i could jump into it and be covered from head to toe.
i would walk around within summer.
people would look at me and jump in, too.
soon, no more people would be on the outside.

then some damn fool would declare himself winter.
space would be evacuated.
i would be summer solitude
while others wallowed in the cold masses of darkness and chills.
we'd be playing a game with the seasons.

NATURALLY

the sun shoots him up with laughter
    in the morning.
breathing in,
his head becomes light with dizzy freshness.
he's high
naturally.

blue jeans patched have felt everything.
love has faded them,
sadness has torn them.
checkered squares mend the lonely spaces
while black thread holds their laughter
together
where smiles have broken out.
our lives run through everysstitch
while memories sift through
the holes in our pockets.

Renae Rovenhagen (con't)

DON'T ASK FOR LAUGHS

i can scribble,
yet i'm straight.
i can scribble,
because i can't be sure of what to say.

i know what it's like --

how buzzed the body becomes,
how funny a simpleton can be,
how vibrant sounds become,
buzzing,
ringing,
straining,
bleeping.

a smile becomes glued to the face
while pictures focus in crooked
through ice-covered eyes, instamatic.
i look into the eyes
and there's nothing

nothing

but brown rings going round and round and round,
yet sitting still.

either it's funny
or it's pathetic.

people (your friends) view it like that.
you're a fucked-up, stoney chick
or
a sad, confused, dope-addicted girl.
i'm not condemning anyone.
i sound like...well...i don't like the way i'm sounding.

because i love to get high.

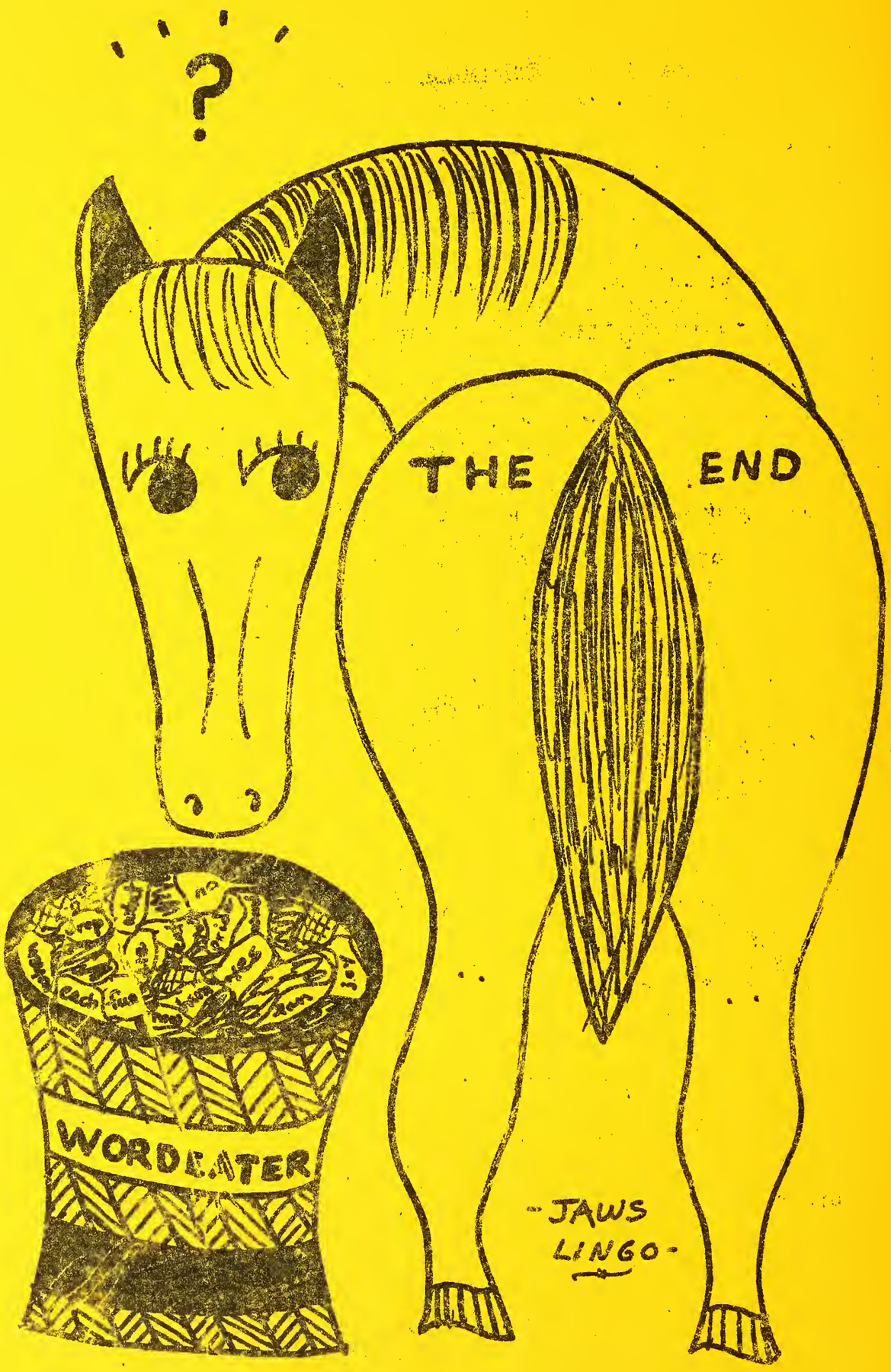
i love it.

but it's time for me to change my high,

i don't want the laughs or the pity.

APRIL FOOL

People see my smile
but so often I hide behind it.
It's not that I want to
but because they wouldn't understand.
It's easier to hide anyway.
If someone sees a frown on my face,
they ask me what is wrong.
Then my heart starts beating heavy
and my eyes begin to water
and I start thinking about a cigarette
and I want to write things down.
It's hard to do eyerything at once.
A smile can hide so much.


?
THE END
WORDEATER
-JAWS
LINGO-